

By this repulse receiv'd, and hold't in Hell  
 620 No triumph; in all her Gates *Abaddon* rues  
 Thy bold attempt; hereafter learn with awe  
 To dread the Son of God: he all unarm'd  
 Shall chase thee with the terror of his voice  
 From thy *Demoniac* holds, possession foul,  
 Thee and thy Legions, yelling they shall fly,  
 And beg to hide them in a herd of Swine,  
 Lest he command them down into the deep  
 Bound, and to torment sent before their time.  
 Hail Son of the most High, heir of both Worlds,  
 630 Queller of Satan, on thy glorious work  
 Now enter, and begin to save mankind.

Thus they the Son of God our Saviour meek  
 Sung Victor, and from Heavenly Feast refresh'd  
 Brought on his way with joy he unobserv'd  
 Home to his Mothers house private return'd.

The END.

Samson Agonistes,  
 A  
 DRAMATICK  
 POEM.

The AUTHOUR  
 JOHN MILTON.

*Aristot. Poet. Cap. 6.*

*Τραγωδία μιμησις παθῶν ἀνθρώπων, &c.*

*Tragedia est imitatio actionis seriae, &c. Per misericordiam  
 & metum perficiens talium affectuum lustrationem.*

LONDON,

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*Of that sort of Dramatick Poem which is call'd  
Tragedy.*

**T**Ragedy, as it was anciently compos'd hath been ever held the gravest, moralest, and most profitable of all other Poems: therefore said by *Aristotle* to be of power by raising pity and fear, or terrour, to purge the mind of those and such like passions, that is, to temper and reduce them to just measure with a kind of delight, stirr'd up by reading or seeing those passions well imitated. Nor is Nature wanting in her own effects to make good his assertion: for so in Physick things of melancholick hue and quality are us'd against melancholy, sower against sower, salt to remove salt humours. Hence Philosophers and other gravest Writers, as *Cicero*, *Plutarch* and others, frequently cite out of Tragick Poets, both to adorn and illustrate their discourse. The Apostle *St. Paul* himself thought it not unworthy to insert a verse of *Euripides* into the Text of Holy Scripture, *1 Cor. 15. 33.* and *Paræus* commenting on the *Revelation*, divides the whole Book as a Tragedy, into Acts distinguish'd each by a Chorus of Heavenly Harpings and Song between. Heretofore Men in highest dignity have labour'd not a little to be thought able to compose a Tragedy. Of that honour *Dionysius* the elder was no less ambitious, than before of his attaining to the Tyranny. *Augustus Cæsar* also had begun his *Ajax*, but unable to please his own judgment with what he had begun, left it unfinished. *Seneca* the Philosopher is by some thought the Authour of those Tragedies (at least the best of them) that go under that name. *Gregory Nazianzen*, a Father of the Church, thought it not unbeseeming the sanctity of his person to write a Tragedy, which is entitl'd, *Christ suffering*. This is mention'd to vindicate Tragedy from the small esteem, or rather infamy, which in the account of many it undergoes at this day with other common interludes; hap'ning through the Poets error of intermixing Comick stuff with Tragick sadness and gravity; or introducing trivial and vulgar persons, which by all judicious hath been counted absurd; and brought in without discretion, corruptly to gratifie the people. And though ancient Tragedy use no Prologue, yet using sometimes, in case of self-defence, or explanation



*Of that sort of Dramatick Poem call'd Tragedy.*

nation, that which *Martial* calls an Epistle; in behalf of this Tragedy coming forth after the ancient manner, much different from what among us passes for best, thus much before-hand may be Epistl'd; that *Chorus* is here introduc'd after the Greek manner, not ancient onely but modern, and still in use among the *Italians*. In the modelling therefore of this Poem, with good reason, the Ancients and *Italians* are rather follow'd, as of much more Authority and fame. The measure of Verse us'd in the Chorus is of all sorts, call'd by the *Greeks* *Mons-trophick*, or rather *Apolelymenon*, without regard had to *Strophe*, *Antistrophe* or *Epod*, which were a kind of Stanza's fram'd onely for the Musick, then us'd with the Chorus that sung; not essential to the Poem, and therefore not material; or being divided into Stanza's or Pauses, they may be call'd *Allæostropha*. Division into Act and Scene referring chiefly to the Stage (to which this work never was intended) is here omitted.

It suffices if the whole Drama be found not produc'd beyond the fifth Act, of the style and uniformity, and that commonly call'd the Plot, whether intricate or explicit, which is nothing indeed but such æconomy, or disposition of the fable as may stand best with verisimilitude and decorum; they onely will best judge who are not unacquainted with *Æschylus*, *Sophocles* and *Euripides*, the three Tragick Poets unequal'd yet by any, and the best rule to all who endeavour to write Tragedy. The circumscription of time wherein the whole Drama begins and ends is according to ancient rule, and best example, within the space of 24. hours.

The

## The Argument.

**S**amson made Captive, Blind, and now in the prison at Gaza, there to labour as in a common work-house, on a Festival day, in the general cessation from labour, comes forth into the open Air, to a place nigh, somewhat retir'd, there to sit a while and bemoan his condition. Where he happens at length to be visited by certain friends and equals of his tribe, which make the Chorus, who seek to comfort him what they can; then by his old Father Manoa, who endeavours the like, and withall tells him his purpose to procure his liberty by ransom; a lastly, that this Feast was proclaim'd by the Philistins as day of Thanksgiving for their deliverance from the hands of Samson, which yet more troubles him. Manoa then departs to prosecute his indeavour with the Philistian Lords for Samson's redemption; who in the mean while is visited by other persons; and lastly by a publick Officer to require his coming to the Feast before the Lords and People, to play or shew his strength in their presence; he at first refuses, dismissing the publick Officer with absolute denial to come; at length persuaded inwardly that this was from God, he yields to go along with him, who came now the second time with great threatenings to fetch him; the Chorus yet remaining on the place, Manoa returns full of joyfull hope, to procure e'er long his Son's deliverance: in the midst of which discourse an Hebrew comes in haste confusealy at first; and afterward more distinctly relating the Catastrophe, what Samson had done to the Philistins, and by accident to himself; wherewith the Tragedy ends,

The



## The Persons.

Samfon.

Manoa *the Father of Samfon.*

Dalila *his Wife.*

Harapha *of Gath.*

Publick Officer.

Messenger.

Chorus of Danites.

*The Scene before the Prison in Gaza.*

Samfon

( 1 )

## SAMSON AGONISTES.

Samf. **A** Little onward lend thy guiding hand  
To these dark steps, a little farther on;  
For yonder bank hath choice of Sun or shade,  
There I am wont to sit, when any chance  
Relieves me from my task of servile toil,  
Daily in the common Prison else enjoy'd me,  
Where I a Prisoner chain'd, scarce freely draw  
The air imprison'd also, close and damp,  
Unwholesome draught: but here I feel amends,  
The breath of Heav'n fresh-blowing, pure and sweet,  
With day-spring born; here leave me to respire.  
This day a solemn Feast the people hold  
To Dagon their Sea-Idol, and forbid  
Laborious works, unwillingly this rest  
Their Superstition yields me; hence with leave  
Retiring from the popular noise, I seek  
This unfrequented place to find some ease,  
Ease to the body some, none to the mind  
From restless thoughts, that like a deadly swarm  
Of Hornets arm'd, no sooner found alone,  
But rush upon me thronging, and present  
Times past, what once I was, and what am now.  
O wherefore was my birth from Heaven foretold

Twice



Twice by an Angel; who at last in sight  
 Of both my Parents all in flames ascended  
 From off the Altar, where an Off'ring burn'd,  
 As in a fiery column charioting  
 His Godlike presence, and from some great act  
 Or benefit reveal'd to *Abraham's* race?  
 Why was my breeding order'd and prescrib'd  
 As of a person separate to God,  
 Design'd for great exploits; if I must die  
 Betray'd, Captiv'd, and both my Eyes put out,  
 Made of my Enemies the scorn and gaze;  
 To grind in Brazen Fetters under task  
 With this Heav'n-gifted strength! O glorious strength  
 Put to the labour of a Beast, debas'd  
 Lower than bondslave! Promise was that I  
 Should *Israel* from *Philistian* yoke deliver;  
 Ask for this great deliverer now, and find him  
 Eyeless in *Gaza* at the Mill with slaves,  
 Himself in bonds under *Philistian* yoke;  
 Yet stay, let me not rashly call in doubt  
 Divine Prediction; what if all foretold  
 Had been fulfill'd but through mine own default,  
 Whom have I to complain of but my self?  
 Who this high gift of strength committed to me,  
 In what part lodg'd, how easily bereft me,  
 Under the Seal of silence could not keep,  
 But weakly to a Woman must reveal it.  
 O'ercome with importunity and tears.  
 O impotence of mind, in body strong!  
 But what is strength without a double share  
 Of wisdom, vast, unwieldy, burthensome,  
 Proudly secure, yet liable to fall  
 By weakest subtilties, not made to rule,  
 But to subserve where wisdom bears command.

God.

God, when he gave me strength, to shew withall  
 How slight the gift was, hung it in my Hair.  
 But Peace, I must not quarrel with the will  
 Of highest dispensation, which herein  
 Happ'ly had ends above my reach to know:  
 Suffices that to me strength is my bane,  
 And proves the source of all my miseries;  
 So many, and so huge, that each apart  
 Would ask a life to wail, but chief of all,  
 O loss of sight, of thee I most complain!  
 Blind among Enemies, O worse than chains,  
 Dungeon, or beggary, decrepit age!  
 Light the prime work of God to me is extinct,  
 And all her various objects of delight  
 Annull'd, which might in part my grief have eas'd,  
 Inferiour to the vilest now become  
 Of man or worm; the vilest here excell me,  
 They creep, yet see, I dark in light expos'd  
 To daily fraud, contempt, abuse and wrong,  
 Within doors, or without, still as a fool,  
 In power of others, never in my own;  
 Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half.  
 O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,  
 Irrecoverably dark, total Eclipse  
 Without all hope of day!  
 O first created Beam, and thou great Word,  
 Let there be light, and light was over all;  
 Why am I thus bereav'd thy prime decree?  
 The Sun to me is dark  
 And silent as the Moon,  
 When she deserts the night  
 Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.  
 Since light so necessary is to life,  
 And almost life it self, if it be true

B

That



That light is in the Soul,  
 She all in every part; why was the light  
 To such a tender ball as th' eye confin'd?  
 So obvious and so easie to be quench't,  
 And not as feeling through all parts diffus'd,  
 That she might look at will through every pore?  
 Then had I not been thus exil'd from light;  
 As in the land of darkness yet in light,  
 To live a life half dead, a living death,  
 And buried; but O yet more miserable!  
 My self, my Sepulchre, a moving Grave,  
 Buried, yet not exempt  
 By privilege of death and burial  
 From worst of other evils, pains and wrongs,  
 But made hereby obnoxious more  
 To all the miseries of life,  
 Life in captivity  
 Among inhumane foes.  
 But who are these? for with joint pace I hear  
 The tread of many feet steering this way;  
 Perhaps my enemies who come to stare  
 At my affliction, and perhaps to insult,  
 Their daily practice to afflict me more.

*Chor.* This, this is he; softly a while,  
 Let us not break in upon him;  
 O change beyond report, thought or belief!  
 See how he lies at random, carelessly diffus'd,  
 With languish'd head unpropt,  
 As one past hope, abandon'd,  
 And by himself given over;  
 In slavish habit, ill-fitted weeds  
 O'er-worn and soild;  
 Or do my eyes misrepresent? Can this be he,

That Heroick, that Renown'd,  
 Irresistible *Samson*? whom unarm'd  
 No strength of man, or fiercest wild beast could withstand;  
 Who tore the Lion, as the Lion tears the Kid,  
 Ran on imbattl'd Armies clad in Iron,  
 And weaponless himself,  
 Made Arms ridiculous, useless the forgery  
 Of brazen Shield and Spear, the hammer'd Cuirass,  
*Chalybean* temper'd steel, and frock of mail  
 Adamantean Proof;  
 But safest he who stood aloof,  
 When insupportably his foot advanc'd,  
 In scorn of their proud arms and warlike tools,  
 Spurn'd them to death by Troops. The bold *Ascalonite*  
 Fled from his Lion ramp, old Warriors turn'd  
 Their plated backs under his heel;  
 Or grovling foil'd their crested helmets in the dust.  
 Then with what trivial weapon came to hand,  
 The Jaw of a dead Ass, his sword of bone,  
 A thousand fore-skins fell, the flower of *Palestin*  
 In *Ramath-lechi* famous to this day:  
 Then by main force pull'd up, and on his shoulders bore  
 The Gates of *Azza*, Post, and massie Bar  
 Up to the Hill by *Hebron*, seat of Giants old,  
 No journey of a Sabbath-day, and loaded so;  
 Like whom the Gentiles feign to bear up Heav'n.  
 Which shall I first bewail,  
 Thy Bondage or lost Sight,  
 Prison within Prison  
 Inseparably dark?  
 Thou art become (O worst imprisonment!)  
 The Dungeon of thy self; thy Soul  
 (Which Men enjoying sight oft without cause complain'd)  
 Imprison'd now indeed,



In real darkness of the body dwells,  
 Shut up from outward light  
 To incorporate with gloomy night;  
 For inward light alas  
 Puts forth no visual beam.  
 O mirror of our fickle state,  
 Since man on earth unparallel'd?  
 The rarer thy example stands,  
 By how much from the top of wondrous glory,  
 Strongest of mortal men,  
 To lowest pitch of abject fortune thou art fall'n.  
 For him I reckon not in high estate  
 Whom long descent of birth  
 Or the spear of fortune raises;  
 But thee whose strength, while virtue was her mate,  
 Might have subdu'd the Earth,  
 Universally crown'd with highest praises.

*Samf.* I hear the sound of words, their sense the air  
 Dissolves unjointed e'er it reach my ear.

*Chor.* He spake, let us draw nigh. Matchless in might,  
 The glory late of *Israel*, now the grief,  
 We come thy friends and neighbours not unknown  
 From *Eshtaol* and *Zora's* fruitfull Vale  
 To visit or bewail thee, or if better,  
 Counsel or consolation we may bring,  
 Salve to thy Sores, apt words have power to swage  
 The tumours of a troubl'd mind,  
 And are as Balm to fester'd wounds.

*Samf.* Your coming, Friends, revives me, for I learn  
 Now of my own experience, not by talk,  
 How counterfeit a coin they are who friends

Bear in their Supercription ( of the most  
 I would be understood ) in prosperous days  
 They swarm, but in adverse withdraw their head  
 Not to be found, though sought. Ye see, O friends,  
 How many evils have enclos'd me round;  
 Yet that which was the worst now least afflicts me,  
 Blindness, for had I sight, confus'd with shame,  
 How could I once look up, or heave the head,  
 Who like a foolish Pilot have shipwreck'd  
 My Vessel trusted to me from above,  
 Gloriously rigg'd; and for a word, a tear,  
 Fool, have divulg'd the secret gift of God  
 To a deceitfull Woman; tell me, Friends,  
 Am I not sung and proverb'd for a Fool  
 In every street, do they not say, how well  
 Are come upon him his deserts? yet why?  
 Immeasurable strength they might behold  
 In me, of wisdom nothing more than mean;  
 This with the other should, at least, have pair'd,  
 These two proportion'd ill drove me transverse.

*Chor.* Tax not divine disposal: wisest Men  
 Have err'd, and by bad Women been deceiv'd;  
 And shall again, pretend they ne'er so wise.  
 Deject not then so overmuch thy self,  
 Who hast of sorrow thy full load besides;  
 Yet truth to say, I oft have heard men wonder  
 Why thou shouldst wed *Philistian* Woman rather  
 Than of thine own Tribe fairer, or as fair,  
 At least of thy own Nation, and as noble.

*Samf.* The first I saw at *Timna*, and she pleas'd  
 Me, not my Parents, that I fought to wed,  
 The daughter of an Infidel; they knew not

That



That what I mention'd was of God ; I knew  
 From intimate impulse, and therefore urg'd  
 The Marriage on ; that by occasion hence  
 I might begin *Israel's* Deliverance,  
 The work to which I was divinely call'd.  
 She proving false, the next I took to Wife  
 (O that I never had ! fond with too late, )  
 Was in the Vale of *Sorec*, *Dalila*,  
 That specious Monster, my accomplisht snare.  
 I thought it lawfull from my former act,  
 And the same end ; still watching to oppress  
*Israel's* Oppressours : of what now I suffer  
 She was not the prime cause, but I my self,  
 Who vanquisht with a peal of words (O weakness !)  
 Gave up my fort of silence to a Woman.

*Chor.* In seeking just occasion to provoke  
 The *Philistine*, thy Countries Enemy,  
 Thou never wast remiss, I bear thee witness :  
 Yet *Israel* still serves with all his Sons.

*Samf.* That fault I take not on me, but transfer  
 On *Israel's* Governours, and Heads of Tribes,  
 Who seeing those great acts which God had done  
 Singly by me against their Conquerours  
 Acknowledg'd not, or not at all consider'd  
 Deliverance offer'd : I on the other side  
 Us'd no ambition to commend my deeds,  
 The deeds themselves, though mute, spoke loud the doer ;  
 But they persisted deaf, and would not seem  
 To count them things worth notice, till at length  
 Their Lords the *Philistines* with gather'd powers  
 Enter'd *Judea* seeking me, who then  
 Safe to the rock of *Etham* was retir'd,

Not

Not flying, but fore-casting in what place  
 To set upon them what advantag'd best ;  
 Mean while the men of *Judah* to prevent  
 The harrafs of their Land beset me round ;  
 I willingly on some conditions came  
 Into their hands, and they as gladly yield me  
 To the uncircumcis'd a welcom prey,  
 Bound with two cords ; but cords to me were threds  
 Toucht with the flame : on their whole Hoast I flew  
 Unarm'd, and with a trivial weapon fell'd  
 Their choicest youth ; they onely liv'd who fled.  
 Had *Judah* that day join'd, or one whole Tribe,  
 They had by this possess'd the Towers of *Gath*,  
 And lorded over them whom now they serve ;  
 But what more oft in Nations grown corrupt,  
 And by their vices brought to servitude,  
 Than to love Bondage more than Liberty,  
 Bondage with ease than strenuous liberty ;  
 And to despise, or envy, or suspect  
 Whom God hath of his special favour rais'd  
 As their Deliverer ; if he aught begin,  
 How frequent to desert him, and at last  
 To heap ingratitude on worthiest deeds ?

*Cho.* Thy words to my remembrance bring  
 How *Succoth* and the Fort of *Penueh*  
 Their great Deliverer contemn'd,  
 The matchless *Gideon* in pursuit  
 Of *Madian* and her vanquisht Kings :  
 And how ingratfull *Ephraim*  
 Had dealt with *Jephtha*, who by argument,  
 Not worse than by his shield and spear  
 Defended *Israel* from the *Ammonite*,  
 Had not his prowess quell'd their pride

In



In that fore battel when so many dy'd  
Without Reprieve adjudg'd to death,  
For want of well pronouncing *Shibboleth*.

*Samf.* Of such examples add me to the roul,  
Me easily indeed mine may neglect,  
But God's propos'd deliverance not so.

*Chor.* Just are the ways of God,  
And justifiable to Men;  
Unless there be who think not God at all,  
If any be, they walk obscure;  
For of such Doctrine never was there School,  
But the heart of the Fool,  
And no man therein Doctour but himself.

Yet more there be who doubt his ways not just,  
As to his own edicts, found contradicting,  
Then give the reins to wandring thought,  
Regardless of his Glory's diminution;  
Till by their own perplexities involv'd  
They ravel more, still less resolv'd,

But never find self-satisfying solution,  
As if they would confine th' interminable,  
And tie him to his own prescript,  
Who made our Laws to bind us, not himself,  
And hath full right to exempt.

Whom so it pleases him by choice  
From National obstriction, without taint  
Of sin, or legal debt;  
For with his own Laws he can best dispense.

He would not else who never wanted means,  
Nor in respect of the enemy just cause  
To set his people free,  
Have prompted this Heroick *Nazarite*

Against

Against his vow of strictest purity,  
To seek in marriage that fallacious Bride,  
Unclean, unchaste.

Down Reason then, at least vain reasonings down,  
Though Reason here aver  
That moral verdict quits her of unclean:  
Unchaste was subsequent, her stain not his.

But see here comes thy reverend Sire  
With carefull step, Locks white as down,  
Old *Manoah*: advise  
Forthwith how thou oughtst to receive him.

*Samf.* Ay me, another inward grief awak'd  
With mention of that name renews th' assault.

*Man.* Brethren and men of *Dan*, for such ye seem,  
Though in this uncouth place; if old respect,  
As I suppose, toward your once gloryed friend,  
My Son now Captive, hither hath inform'd  
Your younger feet, while mine cast back with age  
Came lagging after; say if he be here.

*Chor.* As signal now in low dejected state,  
As earst in highest, behold him where he lies.

*Man.* O miserable change! is this the man,  
That invincible *Samson*, far renown'd  
The dread of *Israel's* foes, who with a strength  
Equivalent to Angels walk'd their streets,  
None offering fight; who single combatant  
Duell'd their Armies rank'd in proud array,  
Himself an Army, now unequal match  
To save himself against a coward arm'd  
At one spears length. O ever failing trust

C

In



In mortal strength ! and oh what not in man  
 Deceivable and vain ? Nay what thing good  
 Pray'd for, but often proves our woe, our bane ?  
 I pray'd for Children, and thought barrenness  
 In wedlock a reproach ; I gain'd a Son,  
 Such a Son as all men hail'd me happy ;  
 Who would be now a Father in my stead ?  
 O wherefore did God grant me my request,  
 And as a blessing with such pomp adorn'd ?  
 Why are his gifts desirable, to tempt  
 Our earnest Prayers, then given with solemn hand  
 As Graces, draw a Scorpions tail behind ?  
 For this did th' Angel twice descend ? for this  
 Ordain'd thy nurture holy, as of a Plant ;  
 Select and Sacred, Glorious for a while,  
 The miracle of men ; then in an hour  
 Ensnar'd, assaulted, overcome, led bound,  
 Thy Foes derision, Captive, Poor and Blind,  
 Into a Dungeon thrust, to work with Slaves ?  
 Alas methinks whom God hath chosen once  
 To worthiest deeds, if he through frailty err,  
 He should not so o'erwhelm, and as a thrall  
 Subject him to so foul indignities,  
 Be it but for honours sake of former deeds.

*Samf.* Appoint not heavenly disposition, Father,  
 Nothing of all these evils hath befall'n me  
 But justly ; I my self have brought them on,  
 Sole Authour, I, sole cause ; if ought seem vile,  
 As vile hath been my folly, who have profan'd  
 The mystery of God giv'n me under pledge  
 Of vow, and have betray'd it to a woman,  
 A *Canaanite*, my faithless enemy.  
 This well I knew, nor was at all surpris'd,

But

But warn'd by oft experience : did not she  
 Of *Timna* first betray me, and reveal  
 The secret wrested from me in her height  
 Of Nuptial love profest, carrying it straight  
 To them who had corrupted her, my Spies,  
 And Rivals ? In this other was there found  
 More Faith ? who also in her prime of love,  
 Spousal embraces, vitiated with Gold,  
 Though offer'd onely, by the scent conceiv'd  
 Her spurious first-born ; Treason against me ?  
 Thrice she assay'd with flattering prayers and sighs,  
 And amorous reproaches to win from me  
 My capital secret, in what part my strength  
 Lay stor'd, in what part summ'd, that she might know ;  
 Thrice I deluded her, and turn'd to sport  
 Her importunity, each time perceiving  
 How openly, and with what impudence  
 She purpos'd to betray me, and (which was worse  
 Than undissembl'd hate ) with what contempt  
 She sought to make me Traitour to my self ;  
 Yet the fourth time, when mustering all her wiles,  
 With blandish'd parlies, feminine assaults,  
 Tongue-batteries, she surceas'd not day nor night  
 To storm me over-watch'd, and wearied out.  
 At times when men seek most repose and rest,  
 I yielded, and unlock'd her all my heart,  
 Who with a grain of manhood well resolv'd  
 Might easily have shook off all her snares :  
 But foul effeminacy held me yok'd  
 Her bond-slave ; O indignity, O blot  
 To Honour and Religion ! servile mind  
 Rewarded well with servile punishment !  
 The base degree to which I now am fall'n,  
 These raggs, this grinding, is not yet so base

C 2

As



As was my former servitude, ignoble,  
Unmanly, ignominious, infamous,  
True slavery, and that blindness worse than this,  
That saw not how degenerately I serv'd.

*Man.* I cannot praise thy Marriage choices, Son,  
Rather approv'd them not; but thou didst plead  
Divine impulsion prompting how thou might'st  
Find some occasion to infect our Foes.  
I state not that; this I am sure our Foes  
Found soon occasion thereby to make thee  
Their Captive, and their Triumph; thou the sooner  
Temptation found'st, or over-potent charms  
To violate the sacred trust of silence  
Deposited within thee; which to have kept  
Tacit, was in thy power: true; and thou bear'st  
Enough, and more the burthen of that fault;  
Bitterly hast thou paid, and still art paying  
That rigid score. A worse thing yet remains,  
This day the *Philistines* a popular Feast  
Here celebrate in *Gaza*; and proclaim  
Great Pomp, and Sacrifice, and Praises loud  
To *Dagon*, as their God who hath deliver'd  
Thee, *Samson*, bound and blind into their hands,  
Them out of thine, who slew'st them many a slain.  
So *Dagon* shall be magnifi'd, and God,  
Besides whom is no God, compar'd with Idols,  
Disglorifi'd, blasphem'd, and had in scorn  
By the Idolatrous rout amidst their wine;  
Which to have come to pass by means of thee,  
*Samson*, of all thy sufferings think the heaviest,  
Of all reproach the most with shame that ever  
Could have befall'n thee and thy Father's house.

Samf.

*Samf.* Father, I do acknowledge and confess  
That I this honour, I this pomp have brought  
To *Dagon*, and advanc'd his praises high  
Among the Heathen round; to God have brought  
Dishonour, obloquy, and op't the mouths  
Of Idolists, and Atheists; have brought scandal  
To *Israel*, diffidence of God, and doubt  
In feeble hearts, propense enough before  
To waver, or fall off and joyn with idols;  
Which is my chief affliction, shame and sorrow,  
The anguish of my Soul, that suffers not  
Mine eye to harbour sleep, or thoughts to rest.  
This only hope relieves me, that the strife  
With me hath end; all the contest is now  
'Twixt God and *Dagon*; *Dagon* hath presum'd,  
Me overthrown, to enter lists with God,  
His Deity comparing and preferring  
Before the God of *Abraham*. He, be sure,  
Will not connive, or linger, thus provok'd,  
But will arise and his great name assert  
*Dagon* must stoop, and shall e'er long receive  
Such a discomfit, as shall quite despoil him  
Of all these boasted Trophies won on me,  
And with confusion blank his Worshipers.

*Man.* With cause this hope relieves thee, and these words  
I as a Prophecy receive: for God, that lov'st thy people,  
Nothing more certain, will not long defer  
To vindicate the glory of his Name  
Against all competition; nor will long  
Endure it, doubtfull whether God be Lord,  
Or *Dagon*. But for thee what shall be done?  
Thou must not in the mean while here forget

Lie



Lie in this miserable loathsome plight  
Neglected. I already have made way  
To some *Philistian* Lords, with whom to treat  
About thy ranfome: well they may by this  
Have satisf'd their utmost of revenge  
By pains and slaveries, worfe than death inflicted  
On thee who now no more canst doe them harm.

*Samf.* Spare that proposal, Father, spare the trouble  
Of that sollicitation; let me here,  
As I deserve, pay on my punishment;  
And expiate, if possible, my crime,  
Shamefull garrulity. To have reveal'd  
Secrets of men, the secrets of a friend,  
How heinous had the fact been, how deserving  
Contempt, and scorn of all, to be excluded  
All friendship and avoided as a blab,  
The mark of fool set on his front?  
But I God's counsell have not kept, his holy secret  
Presumptuously have publish'd, impiously,  
Weakly at least, and shamefully: A sin  
That *Gentiles* in their Parables condemn  
To their abyfs and horrid pains confin'd.

*Man.* Be penitent and for thy fault contrite,  
But act not in thy own affliction, Son;  
Repent the sin, but if the punishment  
Thou canst avoid, self preservation-bids;  
Or th' execution leave to high disposal,  
And let another hand, not thine, exact  
Thy penal forfeit from thy self; perhaps  
God will relent, and quit thee all his debt;  
Who ever more approves and more accepts  
(Best pleas'd with humble and filial submission)

Him who imploring mercy sues for life,  
Than who self-rigorous chuses death as due;  
Which argues over-just, and self-displeas'd  
For self-offence, more than for God offended.  
Reject not then what offer'd means, who knows  
But God hath set before us, to return thee  
Home to thy countrey and his Sacred house,  
Where thou mayst bring thy off'rings, to avert  
His farther ire, with prayers and vows renew'd.

*Samf.* His pardon I implore, but as for life,  
To what end should I seek it? when in strength  
All mortals I excell'd, and great in hopes  
With youthfull courage and magnanimous thoughts  
Of birth from Heav'n foretold and high exploits,  
Full of divine instinct, after some proof  
Of Acts indeed heroick, far beyond  
The Sons of *Anack*, famous now and blaz'd,  
Fearless of danger, like a petty God  
I walk'd about admir'd of all and dreaded  
On hostile ground, none daring my affront.  
Then swell'n with pride into the snare I fell  
Of fair fallacious looks, venereal trains,  
Softn'd with pleasure and voluptuous life;  
At length to lay my head and hollow pledge  
Of all my strength in the lascivious lap  
Of a deceitfull Concubine who shor'd me  
Like a tame Weither, all my pretious fleece,  
Then turn'd me out ridiculous, despoil'd,  
Shaven, and disarm'd among mine enemies.

Chor.



*Chor.* Desire of wine and all delicious drinks  
Which many a famous Warriour overturns,  
Thou couldst repress, nor did the dancing Ruby  
Sparkling, out-pour'd, the flavour or the smell,  
Or taste that cheers the hearts of Gods or Men,  
Allure thee from the cool Crystalline stream.

*Samf.* Wherever fountain or fresh current flow'd  
Against the Eastern ray, translucent, pure,  
With touch aetherial of Heav'n's fiery rod  
I drank, from the clear milky juice allaying  
Thirst, and refresh'd; nor envy'd them the grape  
Whose heads that turbulent liquor fills with fumes.

*Chor.* O madness, to think use of strongest wines  
And strongest drinks our chief support of health,  
When God with these forbidd'n made choice to rear  
His mighty Champion, strong above compare,  
Whose drink was only from the liquid brook.

*Sam.* But what avail'd this temperance, not complete  
Against another object more enticing?  
What boots it at one gate to make defence,  
And at another, to let in the Foe  
Effeminately vanquish'd? by which means,  
Now blind, disheartn'd, sham'd, dishonour'd, quell'd,  
To what can I be useful, wherein serve  
My Nation, and the work from Heav'n impos'd,  
But to sit idle on the household hearth,  
A burdenous drone; to visitants a gaze,  
Or pitied object, these redundant locks  
Robustious to no purpose clustring down,  
Vain monument of strength; till length of years

And

And sedentary numness craze my limbs  
To a contemptible old age obscure:  
Here rather let me drudge and earn my bread,  
Till vermin or the draff of servile food  
Consume me, and oft invocated death  
Hast'n the welcome end of all my pains.

*Man.* Wilt thou then serve the *Philistines* with that gift  
Which was expressly giv'n thee to annoy them?  
Better at home lie Bed-rid, not onely idle,  
Inglorious, unemploy'd, with age out-worn.  
But God who caus'd a Fountain at thy prayer  
From the dry ground to spring, thy thirst to allay  
After the brunt of Battel, can as easie  
Cause light again within thy eyes to spring,  
Wherewith to serve him better than thou hast;  
And I perswade me so; why else this strength  
Miraculous yet remaining in those locks?  
His might continues in thee not for naught,  
Nor shall his wondrous gifts be frustrate thus.

*Sam.* All otherwise to me my thoughts portend,  
That these dark Orbs no more shall treat with light;  
Nor th' other light of life continue long,  
But yield to double darkness nigh at hand:  
So much I feel my genial Spirits droop,  
My hopes all flat, Nature within me seems  
In all her functions weary of her self;  
My Race of Glory run, and race of shame,  
And I shall shortly be with them that rest.

*Man.* Believe not these suggestions which proceed  
From anguish of the mind and humours black,  
That mingle with thy fancy. I however

D

Must



Must not omit a Father's timely care  
To prosecute the means of thy deliverance  
By ransom, or how else: mean while be calm,  
And healing words from these thy friends admit.

*Sam.* O that torment should not be confin'd  
To the bodies wounds and sores,  
With maladies innumerable  
In heart, head, breast and reins;  
But must secret passage find  
To th' inmost mind,  
There exercise all his fierce accidents,  
And on her purest spirits prey,  
As on entrails, joints and limbs  
With answerable pains, but more intense,  
Though void of corporal sense.

My griefs not onely pain me  
As a lingring disease,  
But finding no redress, ferment and rage,  
Nor less than wounds immedicable  
Rankle, and fester, and gangrene,  
To black mortification.  
Thoughts my Tormenters arm'd with deadly stings  
Mangle my apprehensive tenderest parts,  
Exasperate, exulcerate, and raise  
Dire inflammation which no cooling herb  
Or medicinal liquor can assuage,  
Nor breath of Vernal Air from snowy *Alp.*  
Sleep hath forsook and giv'n me o'er  
To death's benumbing Opium as my onely cure:  
Thence faintings, swoonings of despair,  
And sense of Heav'n's desertion.

I was his nursling once, and choice delight,  
His destin'd from the womb,

Promis'd by Heavenly message twice descending,  
Under his special eye  
Abstemious I grew up and thriv'd amain;  
He led me on to mightiest deeds  
Above the nerve of mortal arm  
Against the uncircumcis'd, our enemies.  
But now hath cast me off as never known,  
And to those cruel enemies,  
Whom I by his appointment had provok'd,  
Left me all helpless with th' irreparable loss  
Of sight, reserv'd alive to be repeated  
The subject of their cruelty or scorn.  
Nor am I in the list of them that hope;  
Hopeless are all my evils, all remediless;  
This one Prayer yet remains, might I be heard,  
No long petition, speedy death,  
The close of all my miseries, and the balm.

*Chor.* Many are the Sayings of the Wise  
In ancient and in modern books enroll'd;  
Extolling Patience as the truest fortitude;  
And to the bearing well of all calamities,  
All chances incident to man's frail life.  
Consolatories writ  
With studied argument, and much persuasion sought  
Lenient of grief and anxious thought,  
But to th' afflicted in his pangs their sound  
Little prevails, or rather seems a tune,  
Harsh, and of dissonant mood from his complaint,  
Unless he feel within  
Some source of consolation from above;  
Secret refreshings, that repair his strength,  
And fainting spirits uphold.



God of our Fathers, what is man!  
 That thou towards him with hand so various,  
 Or might I say contrarious,  
 Temper'st thy providence through his short course,  
 Not ev'nly, as thou rul'st  
 The Angelick orders and inferiour creatures mute,  
 Irrational and brute.  
 Nor do I name of men the common rout,  
 That wandering loose about,  
 Grow up and perish, as the summer flie,  
 Heads without name no more remembred,  
 But such as thou hast solemnly elected,  
 With gifts and graces eminently adorn'd,  
 To some great work, thy glory,  
 And peoples safety, which in part they effect:  
 Yet toward these thus dignifi'd, thou oft  
 Amidst their height of noon,  
 Change'st thy countenance, and thy hand with no regard  
 Of highest favours past  
 From thee on them, or them to thee of service.

Nor onely dost degrade them, or remit  
 To life obscur'd, which were a fair dismissal,  
 But throw'st them lower than thou didst exalt them high,  
 Unseemly falls in humane eye,  
 Too grievous for the trespass or omission,  
 Oft leav'st them to the hostile sword  
 Of Heathen and prophane, their Carcasses  
 To dogs and fowls a prey, or else captiv'd:  
 Or to the unjust tribunals, under change of times,  
 And condemnation of the ingratefull multitude.  
 If these they scape, perhaps in poverty  
 With sickness and disease thou bow'st them down,  
 Painfull diseases and deform'd,  
 In crude old age:

Though

Though not disordinate, yet causless suff'ring  
 The punishment of dissolute days, in fine,  
 Just or unjust, alike seem miserable,  
 For oft alike, both come to evil end.

So deal not with this once thy glorious Champion,  
 The Image of thy strength and mighty Minister.  
 What do I beg? how hast thou dealt already?  
 Behold him in his state calamitous, and turn  
 His labours, for thou canst, to peacefull end.

But who is this, what thing of Sea or Land?  
 Female of sex it seems,  
 That so bedeckt, ornate, and gay,  
 Comes this way sailing  
 Like a stately Ship  
 Of *Tarsus*, bound for th' Isles  
 Of *Javan* or *Gadier*  
 With all her bravery on, and tackle trim,  
 Sails fill'd, and streamers waving,  
 Courted by all the winds that hold them play,  
 An Amber scent of odorous perfume  
 Her harbinger, a damsel train behind;  
 Some rich *Philistian* Matron she may seem,  
 And now at nearer view, no other certain  
 Than *Dalila* thy Wife.

*Samf.* My Wife, my Trayt'refs, let her not come near me.

*Cho.* Yet on she moves, now stands and eyes thee fix'd,  
 About t' have spoke, but now, with head declin'd,  
 Like a fair flower surcharg'd with dew, she weeps  
 And words addrest seem into tears dissolv'd,  
 Wetting the borders of her silk'n veil:  
 But now again she makes addrest to speak.

Dal,



*Dal.* With doubtfull feet and wavering resolution  
I came, still dreading thy displeasure, *Samson*,  
Which to have merited, without excuse,  
I cannot but acknowledge; yet if tears  
May expiate (though the fact more evil drew  
In the perverse event than I foresaw)  
My penance hath not slackn'd, though my pardon  
No way assur'd. But conjugal affection  
Prevailing over fear, and timorous doubt  
Hath lead me on desirous to behold  
Once more thy face, and know of thy estate.  
If aught in my ability may serve  
To light'n what thou suffer'st, and appease  
Thy mind with what amends is in my power,  
Though late, yet in some part to recompense  
My rash, but more unfortunate misdeed.

*Samf.* Out, out *Hyæna*; these are thy wonted arts,  
And arts of every woman false like thee,  
To break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray,  
Then as repentant to submit, beseech,  
And reconciliation move with feign'd remorse,  
Confess, and promise wonders in her change,  
Not truly penitent, but chief to try  
Her husband, how far urg'd his patience bears,  
His virtue or weakness which way to assail:  
Then with more cautious and instructed skill  
Again transgresses, and again submits;  
That wisest and best men full oft beguil'd,  
With goodness principl'd not to reject  
The penitent, but ever to forgive,  
Are drawn to wear out miserable days,  
Entangl'd with a poysonous bosome snake,

If not by quick destruction soon cut off  
As I by thee, to Ages an example.

*Dal.* Yet hear me, *Samson*; not that I endeavour  
To lessen or extenuate my offence,  
But that on th' other side if it be weigh'd  
By it self, with aggravations not surcharg'd,  
Or else with just allowance counterpois'd,  
I may, if possible, thy pardon find  
The easier towards me, or thy hatred less.  
First granting, as I do, it was a weakness  
In me, but incident to all our sex,  
Curiosity, inquisitive, importune  
Of secrets, then with like infirmity  
To publish them, both common female faults:  
Was it not weakness also to make known  
For importunity, that is, for naught,  
Wherein consisted all thy strength and safety?  
To what I did thou shew'd'st me first the way.  
But I to enemies reveal'd, and should not.  
Nor should'st thou have trusted that to woman's frailty  
E'er I to thee, thou to thy self wast cruel.  
Let weakness then with weakness come to part  
So near related, or the same of kind,  
Thine forgive mine; that men may censure thine  
The gentler, if severely thou exact not  
More strength from me, than in thy self was found.  
And what if Love, which thou interpret'st hate,  
The jealousy of Love, powerfull of sway  
In humane hearts, nor less in mine towards thee,  
Caus'd what I did? I saw thee mutable  
Of fancy, fear'd lest one day thou would'st leave me  
As her at *Timna*, fought by all means therefore  
How to endear, and hold thee to me firmest:

No



No better way I saw than by importuning  
 To learn thy secrets, get into my power  
 Thy key of strength and safety: thou wilt say,  
 Why then reveal'd? I was assur'd by those  
 Who tempted me, that nothing was design'd  
 Against thee but safe custody, and hold:  
 That made for me, I knew that liberty  
 Would draw thee forth to perilous enterprises,  
 While I at home sat full of cares and fears  
 Wailing thy absence in my widow'd bed;  
 Here I should still enjoy thee day and night  
 Mine and Love's prisoner, not the *Philistines*,  
 Whole to my self, unhazarded abroad,  
 Fearless at home of partners in my love.  
 These reasons in Love's law have pass'd for good,  
 Though fond and reasonless to some perhaps,  
 And Love hath oft, well meaning, wrought much wo,  
 Yet always pity or pardon hath obtain'd.  
 Be not unlike all others, not austere  
 As thou art strong, inflexible as steel.  
 If thou in strength all mortals dost exceed,  
 In uncompassionate anger do not so.

*Sam.* How cunningly the Sorcerers displays  
 Her own transgressions, to upbraid me mine?  
 That malice not repentance brought thee hither,  
 By this appears: I gave, thou say'st, th' example,  
 I led the way, bitter reproach, but true,  
 I to my self was false e'er thou to me,  
 Such pardon therefore as I give my folly,  
 Take to thy wicked deed: which when thou seest  
 Impartial, self-severe, inexorable,  
 Thou wilt renounce thy seeking, and much rather  
 Confess it feign'd, weakness is thy excuse,

And

And I believe it, weakness to resist  
*Philistian* gold: if weakness may excuse,  
 What Murderer, what Traytor, Paricide,  
 Incestuous, Sacrilegious, but may plead it?  
 All wickedness is weakness: that plea therefore  
 With God or Man will gain thee no remission.  
 But Love constrain'd thee; call it furious rage  
 To satisfy thy lust: Love seeks to have Love;  
 My love how couldst thou hope, who took'st the way  
 To raise in me inexorable hate,  
 Knowing, as needs I must, by thee betray'd?  
 In vain thou striv'st to cover shame with shame,  
 Or by evasions thy crime uncover'st more.

*Dal.* Since thou determin'st weakness for no plea  
 In man or woman, though to thy own condemning,  
 Hear what assaults I had, what snares besides,  
 What sieges girt me round, e'er I consented;  
 Which might have aw'd the best resolv'd of Men,  
 The constantest, to have yielded without blame.  
 It was not Gold, as to my charge thou lay'st,  
 That wrought with me: thou know'st the Magistrates  
 And Princes of my countrey came in person,  
 Solicited, commanded, threatn'd, urg'd,  
 Adjur'd by all the bonds of civil Duty  
 And of Religion, press'd how just it was  
 How honourable, how glorious to entrap  
 A common enemy, who had destroy'd  
 Such numbers of our Nation: and the Priest  
 Was not behind, but ever at my ear,  
 Preaching how meritorious with the Gods  
 It would be to ensnare an irreligious  
 Dishonourer of *Dagon*: what had I  
 To oppose against such powerfull Arguments?

E

Only



Onely my love of thee held long debate ;  
 And combated in silence all these reasons  
 With hard contest : at length that ground'd maxim  
 So rise and celebrated in the mouths  
 Of wisest men ; that to the publick good  
 Private respects must yield ; with grave authority  
 Took full possession of me and prevail'd ;  
 Vertue, as I thought, truth, duty so enjoyning.

*Samf.* I thought where all thy circling wiles would end ;  
 In feign'd Religion, smooth hypocrisie.  
 But had thy love, still odiously pretended,  
 Been, as it ought, sincere, it would have taught thee  
 Far other reasonings, brought forth other deeds.  
 I before all the daughters of my Tribe  
 And of my Nation chose thee from among  
 My enemies, lov'd thee, as too well thou knew'st,  
 Too well, unbosom'd all my secrets to thee,  
 Not out of levity, but over-powr'd  
 By thy request, who could deny thee nothing ;  
 Yet now am judg'd an enemy. Why then  
 Didst thou at first receive me for thy Husband ?  
 Then, as since then, thy countries foe profest :  
 Being once a Wife, for me thou wast to leave  
 Parents and countrey ; nor was I their subject,  
 Nor under their protection but my own,  
 Thou mine, not theirs : if aught against my life  
 Thy Countrey sought of thee, it sought unjustly,  
 Against the law of nature, law of nations,  
 No more thy Countrey, but an impious crew  
 Of men conspiring to uphold their state  
 By worse than hostile deeds, violating the ends  
 For which our Countrey is a name so dear ;  
 Not therefore to be obey'd. But zeal mov'd thee ;

To

To please thy Gods thou didst it ; Gods unable  
 To acquit themselves and prosecute their Foes  
 But by ungodly deeds, the contradiction  
 Of their own Deity, Gods cannot be :  
 Less therefore to be pleas'd, obey'd, or fear'd,  
 These false pretexts and varnish'd colours failing,  
 Bare in thy guilt how foul must thou appear ?

*Dal.* In argument with Men a Woman ever  
 Goes by the worse, whatever be her cause.

*Samf.* For want of words no doubt, or lack of breath,  
 Witness when I was worried with thy peals.

*Dal.* I was a fool, too rash, and quite mistaken  
 In what I thought would have succeeded best.  
 Let me obtain forgiveness of thee, *Samson*,  
 Afford me place to shew what recompence  
 Towards thee I intend for what I have misdone,  
 Misguided ; onely what remains past cure  
 Bear not too sensibly, nor still insist  
 To afflict thy self in vain : though sight be lost,  
 Life yet hath many solaces, enjoy'd  
 Where other senses want not their delights  
 At home in leisure and domestick ease,  
 Exempt from many a care and chance to which  
 Eye-sight exposes daily men abroad.  
 I to the Lords will intercede, not doubting  
 Their favourable ear, that I may fetch thee  
 From forth this loathsome prison-house, to abide  
 With me, where my redoubl'd love and care  
 With nursing diligence, to me glad office,  
 May ever tend about thee to old age  
 With all things gratefull chear'd, and so supply'd,

E 2

That



That what by me thou hast lost thou least shalt miss.

*Samf.* No, no, of my condition take no care ;  
It fits not ; thou and I long since are twain ;  
Nor think me so unwary or accurst  
To bring my feet again into the snare  
Where once I have been caught ; I know thy trains  
Though dearly to my cost, thy ginns, and toyls ;  
Thy fair enchanted cup, and warbling charms  
No more on me have power, their force is null'd,  
So much of Adders wisdom I have learnt  
To fence my ear against thy Sorceries.  
If in my flower of youth and strength, when all men  
Lov'd, honour'd, fear'd me, thou alone couldst hate me  
Thy Husband, slight me, sell me, and forgo me ;  
How wouldst thou use me now, blind, and thereby  
Deceivable, in most things as a child  
Helpless, thence easily contemn'd, and scorn'd,  
And last neglected ? How wouldst thou insult  
When I must live uxorious to thy will  
In perfect thralldom, how again betray me,  
Bearing my words and doings to the Lords  
To gloss upon, and censuring, frown or smile ?  
This Gaol I count the House of Liberty  
To thine, whose doors my feet shall never enter.

*Dal.* Let me approach at least, and touch thy hand.

*Samf.* Not for thy life, lest fierce remembrance wake  
My sudden rage to tear thee joint by joint.  
At distance I forgive thee, go with that ;  
Bewail thy falshood, and the pious works  
It hath brought forth to make thee memorable  
Among illustrious Women, faithfull Wives :

*Cherish*

Cherish thy hastn'd widowhood with the gold  
Of Matrimonial treason : so farewell.

*Dal.* Hee thou art implacable, more deaf  
To prayers than winds and seas, yet winds to seas  
Are reconcil'd at length, and sea to shore :  
Thy anger unappeasable, still rages,  
Eternal Tempest never to be calm'd.  
Why do I humble thus my self, and suing  
For peace, reap nothing but repulse and hate ?  
Bid go with evil omen and the brand  
Of infamy upon my name denounc'd ?  
To mix with thy concernments I desist  
Henceforth, nor too much disapprove my own.  
Fame if not double-fac'd is double-mouth'd,  
And with contrary blast proclaims most deeds,  
On both his Wings, one black, th' other white,  
Bears greatest names in his wild aerie flight.  
My name perhaps among the Circumcis'd  
In *Dan*, in *Judah*, and the bordering Tribes,  
To all posterity may stand defam'd,  
VVith malediction mention'd, and the blot  
Of falshood most unconjugal traduc'd.  
But in my countrey where I most desire,  
In *Ecron*, *Gaza*, *Asdod*, and in *Gath*  
I shall be nam'd among the famoussest  
Of Women, sung at solemn festivals,  
Living and dead recorded, who to save  
Her countrey from a fierce destroyer, chose  
Above the faith of wedlock-bands, my tomb  
VVith odours visited and annual flowers,  
Nor less renown'd than in Mount *Ephraim*,  
*Jael*, who with inhospitable guile  
Smote *Sisera* sleeping through the Temples nail'd.

Nor



Nor shall I count it heinous to enjoy  
The publick marks of honour and reward  
Confer'd upon me, for the piety  
Which to my countrey I was judg'd to have shewn.  
At this who ever envies or repines  
I leave him to his lot, and like my own.

*Chor.* She's gone, a manifest Serpent by her sting  
Discover'd in the end, till now conceal'd.

*Samf.* So let her go, God sent her to debase me,  
And aggravate my folly, who committed  
To such a viper his most sacred trust  
Of secrecie, my safety, and my life.

*Chor.* Yet beauty, though injurious, hath strange power,  
After offence returning, to regain  
Love once possess'd, nor can be easily  
Repulst, without much inward passion felt  
And secret sting of amorous remorse.

*Samf.* Love quarrels oft in pleasing concord end.  
Not wedlock-treachery endangering life.

*Chor.* It is not vertue, wisdom, valour, wit,  
Strength, comeliness of shape, or amplest merit  
That Woman's love can win or long inherit;  
But what it is, hard is to say,  
Harder to hit,  
(Which way soever Men refer it)  
Much like thy riddle, *Samson*, in one day  
Or seven, though one should musing sit;  
If any of these or all, the *Tinnian* bride  
Had not so soon preferr'd

Thy Paranymp, worthless to thee compar'd  
Successour in thy Bed,  
Nor both so loosely disally'd  
Their nuptials, nor this last so treacherously  
Had shorn the fatal Harveft of thy Head.  
Is it for that such outward ornament  
Was lavish'd on their Sex, that inward gifts  
Were left for haste unfinish'd, judgment scant,  
Capacity not rais'd to apprehend  
Or value what is best  
In choice, but ofttest to affect the wrong?  
Or was too much of self-love mixt,  
Of constancy no root infix'd,  
That either they love nothing, or not long?

What e'er it be, to wisest Men and best  
Seeming at first all heavenly under virgin Veil,  
Soft, modest, meek, demure,  
Once joyn'd, the contrary she proves, a Thorn  
Intestine, far within defensive arms  
A cleaving mischief, in his way to vertue  
Adverse and turbulent, or by her charms  
Draws him awry enslav'd  
With dotage, and his sense deprav'd  
To folly and shamefull deeds which ruine ends.  
What Pilot so expert but needs must wreck  
Embarqu'd with such a Stears-mate at the Helm?

Favour'd of Heav'n who finds  
One vertuous rarely found,  
That in domestick good combines:  
Happy that house! his way to peace is smooth:  
But Vertue which breaks through all opposition,  
And all temptation can remove,  
Most shines and most is acceptable above.



Therefore Gods universal Law  
Gave to the Man despotick power  
Over his Female in due awe,  
Nor from that right to part an hour;  
Smile she or lowre:  
So shall he least confusion draw  
On his whole life, not sway'd  
By female usurpation, or dismay'd.  
But had we best retire, I see a storm?

*Samf.* Fair days have oft contracted wind and rain.

*Chor.* But this another kind of tempest brings.

*Samf.* Be less abstruse, my riddling days are past.

*Chor.* Look now for no inchanting voice, nor fear  
The bait of honied words; a rougher tongue  
Draws hitherward, I know him by his stride,  
The Giant *Harapha* of *Gath*, his look  
Haughty as is his pile high-built and proud.  
Comes he in peace? what wind hath blown him hither  
I less conjecture than when first I saw  
The sumptuous *Dalila* floating this way:  
His habit carries peace, his brow defiance.

*Samf.* Or peace or not, alike to me he comes.

*Chor.* His fraught we soon shall know, he now arrives.

*Har.* I come not, *Samson*, to condole thy chance,  
As these perhaps, yet wish it had not been,  
Though for no friendly intent. I am of *Gath*,  
Men call me *Harapha*, of stock renown'd

As *Og* or *Anak* and the *Emims* old  
That *Kariatbaim* held, thou know'st me now  
If thou at all art known. Much I have heard  
Of thy prodigious might and feats perform'd  
Incredible to me, in this displeas'd,  
That I was never present on the place  
Of those encounters, where we might have try'd  
Each others force in camp or list'd field:  
And now am come to see of whom such noise  
Hath walk'd about, and each limb to survey,  
If thy appearance answer loud report.

*Samf.* The way to know were not to see but taste.

*Har.* Dost thou already single me? I thought  
Gieves and the Mill had tam'd thee. O that fortune  
Had brought me to the field where thou art fam'd  
To have wrought such wonders with an Asses Jaw;  
I should have forc'd thee soon with other arms,  
Or left thy carcass where the Ass lay thrown:  
So had the glory of Prowess been recover'd  
To *Palestine*, won by a *Philistine*  
From the unforeskin'd race, of whom thou bear'st  
The highest name for valiant Acts, that honour  
Certain to have won by mortal duel from thee,  
I lose, prevented by thy eyes put out.

*Samf.* Boast not of what thou wouldst have done, but doe  
What then thou wouldst, thou seest it in thy hand.

*Har.* To combat with a blind Man I disdain,  
And thou hast need much washing to be touch'd.

*Samf.* Such usage as your honourable Lords  
Afford me assassinated and betray'd,



Who durst not with their whole united powers  
In fight withstand me single and unarm'd,  
Nor in the house with chamber Ambushes  
Close-banded durst attack me; no not sleeping,  
Till they had hir'd a woman with their gold  
Breaking her Marriage Faith to circumvent me,  
Therefore without feign'd shifts let be assign'd  
Some narrow place enclos'd, where fight may give thee,  
Or rather flight, no great advantage on me;  
Then put on all thy gorgeous arms, thy Helmet  
And Brigandine of brasse, thy broad Habergeon,  
Vant-brass and Greves, and Gauntlet, and thy Spear  
A Weavers beam, and seven-times-folded shield,  
I onely with an Oak'n-staff will meet thee,  
And raise such out-cries on thy clatter'd Iron,  
Which long shall not with-hold me from thy head,  
That in a little time while breath remains thee,  
Thou oft shalt wish thy self at Gath to boast  
Again in safety what thou wouldst have done  
To Samson, but shalt never see Gath more.

*Har.* Thou durst not thus disparage glorious arms  
Which greatest Heroes have in battel worn,  
Their ornament and safety, had not spells  
And black enchantments, some Magicians Art  
Arm'd thee or charm'd thee strong, which thou from Heaven  
Feign'dst at thy Birth was given thee in thy Hair,  
Where strength can least abide, though all thy Hairs  
Were bristles rang'd like those that ridge the back  
Of chaf'd wild Boars, or ruff'd Porcupines.

*Samf.* I know no Spells, use no forbidden Arts;  
My trust is in the living God who gave me

At my Nativity this strength, diffus'd  
No less through all my sinews, joints and bones,  
Than thine, while I preserv'd these locks unshorn,  
The pledge of my unviolated vow.  
For proof hereof, if Dagon be thy god,  
Go to his Temple, invoke his aid  
With solemnest devotion, spread before him  
How highly it concerns his glory now  
To frustrate and dissolve these Magick spells,  
Which I to be the power of Israel's God  
Avow, and challenge Dagon to the test,  
Offering to combat thee his Champion bold,  
With th' utmost of his Godhead seconded;  
Then thou shalt see, or rather to thy sorrow  
Soon feel, whose God is strongest, thine or mine.

*Har.* Presume not on thy God, what e'er he be,  
Thee he regards not, owns not, hath cut off  
Quite from his people, and delivered up  
Into thy Enemies hand, permitted them  
To put out both thine eyes, and fetter'd send thee  
Into the common Prison, there to grind  
Among the Slaves and Asses thy comrades,  
As good for nothing else, no better service  
With those thy boystrous locks, no worthy match  
For valour to assail, nor by the sword  
Of noble Warriour, so to stain his honour,  
But by the Barbers razor best subdu'd.

*Samf.* All these indignities, for such they are  
From thine, these evils I deserve and more,  
Acknowledge them from God inflicted on me  
Justly, yet despair not of his final pardon  
Whose ear is ever open; and his eye



Gracious to re-admit the suppliant ;  
In confidence whereof I once again  
Defie thee to the trial of mortal fight,  
By combat to decide whose God is God,  
Thine or whom I with *Israel's* Sons adore.

*Har.* Fair honour that thou dost thy God, in trusting  
He will accept thee to defend his cause,  
A Murtherer, a Revolter, and a Robber.

*Sam.* Tongue-doughty Giant, how dost thou prove me these?

*Har.* Is not thy Nation subject to our Lords?  
Their Magistrates confest it, when they took thee  
As a League-breaker and deliver'd bound  
Into our hands: for hadst thou not committed  
Notorious murder on those thirty men  
At *Askalon*, who never did thee harm,  
Then like a Robber strip'dst them of their robes?  
The *Philistines*, when thou hadst broke the league,  
Went up with armed powers thee onely seeking,  
To others did no violence nor spoil.

*Samf.* Among the Daughters of the *Philistines*  
I chose a Wife, which argu'd me no foe;  
And in your City held my Nuptial Feast:  
But your ill-meaning Politician Lords,  
Under pretence of Bridal friends and guests,  
Appointed to await me thirty Spies,  
Who threatning cruel death constrain'd the Bride  
To wring from me and tell to them my secret,  
That solv'd the riddle which I had propos'd.  
When I perceiv'd all set on enmity,  
As on my enemies, where ever chanc'd,

I us'd

I us'd hostility, and took their spoil  
To pay my underminers in their coin.  
My Nation was subjected to your Lords.  
It was the force of Conquest; force with force  
Is well ejected when the Conquer'd can.  
But I a private person, whom my Countrey  
As a league-breaker gave up bound, presum'd  
Single Rebellion and did hostile Acts.  
I was no private but a person rais'd  
With strength sufficient and command from Heav'n  
To free my Countrey; if their servile minds  
Me their deliverer sent would not receive,  
But to their Masters gave me up for nought,  
Th' unworthier they; whence to this day they serve.  
I was to doe my part from Heav'n assign'd,  
And had perform'd it if thy known offence  
Had not disabl'd me, not all your force:  
These shifts refuted, answer my appellant  
Though by his blindness main'd for high attempts,  
Who now defies thee thrice to single fight,  
As a petty enterprize of small enforce.

*Har.* With thee a man condemn'd, a Slave enrol'd,  
Due by the Law to capital punishment?  
To fight with thee no man of arms will dign.

*Samf.* Cam'st thou for this, vain boaster, to survey me,  
To descant on my strength, and give thy verdict?  
Come nearer, part not hence so slight inform'd;  
But take good heed my hand survey not thee.

*Har.* O *Baal-zebub*! can my ears unus'd  
Hear these dishonours, and not render death?

Samf.



*Samf.* No man withholds thee, nothing from thy hand  
Fear I incurable; bring up thy van,  
My heels are fetter'd, but my fist is free.

*Har.* This insolence other kind of answer fits.

*Samf.* Go baff'd coward, lest I run upon thee,  
Though in these chains, bulk without spirit vast,  
And with one buffet lay thy structure low,  
Or swing thee in the Air, then dash thee down  
To th' hazard of thy brains and shatter'd sides.

*Har.* By *Astaroth* e'er long thou shalt lament  
These braveries in Irons loaden on thee.

*Chor.* His Giantship is gone somewhat crest-fall'n,  
Stalking with less unconscionable strides,  
And lower looks, but in a sultrier chafe.

*Samf.* I dread him not, nor all his Giant-brood,  
Though fame divulg'd him Father of five Sons  
All of Gigantick size, *Goliath* chief.

*Chor.* He will directly to the Lords, I fear,  
And with malicious counsel stir them up  
Some way or other farther to afflict thee.

*Samf.* He must alledge some cause, and offer'd fight  
Will not dare mention, lest a question rise  
Whether he durst accept the offer or not,  
And that he durst not plain enough appear'd.  
Much more affliction than already felt  
They cannot well impose, nor I sustain;  
If they intend advantage of my labours

The work of many hands, which earns my keeping  
With no small profit daily to my owners.  
But come what will, my deadliest foe will prove  
My speediest friend, by death to rid me hence,  
The worst that he can give, to me the best.  
Yet so it may fall out, because their end  
Is hate, not help to me, it may with mine  
Draw their own ruine who attempt the deed

*Chor.* Oh how comely it is and how reviving  
To the Spirits of just men long oppress'd!  
When God into the hands of their deliverer  
Puts invincible might  
To quell the mighty of the Earth, th' oppressour,  
The brute and boisterous force of violent men  
Hardy and industrious to support  
Tyrannick power, but raging to pursue  
The righteous and all such as honour Truth;  
He all their Ammunition  
And feats of War defeats  
With plain Heroick magnitude of mind  
And celestial vigour arm'd,  
Their Armories and Magazines contemns,  
Renders them useless, while  
With winged expedition  
Swift as the lightning glance he executes  
His errand on the wicked, who surpriz'd  
Lose their defence distracted and amaz'd.

But patience is more oft the exercise  
Of Saints, the trial of their fortitude,  
Making them each his own Deliverer,  
And Victor over all  
That tyranny or fortune can inflict;  
Either of these is in thy lot,



*Samson*, with might endu'd  
Above the Sons of men; but fight bereav'd  
May chance to number thee with those  
Whom Patience finally must crown.  
This Idols day hath been to thee no day of rest,

Labouring thy mind  
More than the working day thy hands,  
And yet perhaps more trouble is behind.  
For I descry this way  
Some other tending, in his hand  
A Sceptre or quaint Staff he bears,  
Comes on amain, speed in his look  
By his habit I discern him now  
A Publick Officer, and now at hand,  
His message will be short and voluble.

*Off.* Hebrews the Pris'ner *Samson* here I seek.

*Chor.* His manacles remark him, there he sits.

*Off.* *Samson*, to thee our Lords thus bid me say;  
This day to *Dagon* is a solemn Feast,  
With Sacrifices, Triumph, Pomp and Games;  
Thy strength they know surpassing humane race,  
And now some publick proof thereof require  
To honour this great Feast, and great Assembly;  
Rise therefore with all speed and come along,  
Where I will see thee heartn'd and fresh clad  
To appear as fits before th' illustrious Lords.

*Samf.* Thou know'st I am an Hebrew, therefore tell them,  
Our Law forbids at their Religious Rites  
My presence; for that cause I cannot come.

*Off.* This answer be assur'd, will not content them.

*Samf.* Have they not sword-players, and ev'ry sort  
Of Gymnick Artists, Wrestlers, Riders, Runners,  
Juglers and Dancers, Anticks, Mummers, Mimirs,  
But they must pick me out with shackles tir'd,  
And over-labour'd at their publick Mill,  
To make them sport with blind activity?  
Do they not seek occasion of new quarrels  
On my refusal to distress me more,  
Or make a game of my calamities?  
Return the way thou cam'st, I will not come.

*Off.* Regard thy self, this will offend them highly.

*Samf.* My self? my conscience and internal peace.  
Can they think me so broken, so debas'd  
With corporal servitude, that my mind ever  
Will condescend to such absurd commands?  
Although their drudge, to be their fool or jester,  
And in my midst of sorrow and heart-grief  
To shew them feats, and play before their god,  
The worst of all indignities, yet on me  
Joyn'd with extreme contempt? I will not come.

*Off.* My message was impos'd on me with speed,  
Brooks no delay: is this thy resolution?

*Samf.* So take it with what speed thy message needs.

*Off.* I am sorry what this stoutness will produce.

*Samf.* Perhaps thou shalt have cause to sorrow indeed.

G

*Chor.*



*Chor.* Consider, *Samson*; matters now are strain'd  
Up to the height, whether to hold or break;  
He's gone, and who knows how he may report  
Thy words by adding fuel to the flame?  
Expect another message more imperious,  
More Lordly thund'ring than thou wilt bear.

*Samf.* Shall I abuse this Consecrated gift  
Of strength, again returning with my hair  
After my great transgression, so requite  
Favour renew'd, and add a greater sin  
By prostituting holy things to Idols;  
A *Nazarite* in place abominable  
Vaunting my strength in honour to their *Dagon*?  
Besides, how vile, contemptible, ridiculous,  
What act more execrably unclean, prophane?

*Chor.* Yet with this strength thou serv'st the *Philistines*,  
Idolatrous, uncircumcis'd, unclean.

*Samf.* Not in their Idol-worship, but by labour  
Honest and lawfull to deserve my food  
Of those who have me in their civil power.

*Chor.* Where the heart joins not, outward acts defile not.

*Samf.* Where outward force constrains, the sentence holds  
But who constrains me to the Temple of *Dagon*,  
Not dragging? the *Philistian* Lords command.  
Commands are no constraints. If I obey them,  
I doe it freely, ventring to displease  
God for the fear of Man and Man prefer,  
Set God behind: which in his jealousy

Shall

Shall never, unrepented, find forgiveness,  
Yet that he may dispense with me or thee  
Present in Temples at Idolatrous Rites  
For some important cause, thou needst not doubt.

*Chor.* How thou wilt here come off surmounts my reach.

*Samf.* Be of good courage, I begin to feel  
Some rousing motions in me which dispose  
To something extraordinary my thoughts.  
I with this Messenger will go along,  
Nothing to do, be sure, that may dishonour  
Our Law, or stain my vow of *Nazarite*.  
If there be ought of presage in the mind,  
This day will be remarkable in my life  
By some great act, or of my days the last.

*Chor.* In time thou hast resolv'd, the man returns.

*Off.* *Samson*, this second message from our Lords  
To thee I am bid say. Art thou our Slave,  
Our Captive, at the publick Mill our drudge,  
And dar'st thou at our sending and command  
Dispute thy coming? come without delay;  
Or we shall find such Engines to assail  
And hamper thee, as thou shalt come of force,  
Though thou art firmler fastn'd than a Rock.

*Samf.* I could be well content to try their Art,  
Which to no few of them would prove pernicious.  
Yet knowing their advantages too many,  
Because they shall not trail me through their streets  
Like a wild Beast, I am content to go.  
Masters commands come with a power resistless

G 2

To



To such as owe them absolute subjection;  
And for a life who will not change his purpose?  
(So mutable are all the ways of men)  
Yet this be sure, in nothing to comply  
Scandalous or forbidden in our Law.

*Off.* I praise thy resolution, doff these links:  
By this compliance thou wilt win the Lords  
To favour, and perhaps to set thee free.

*Saml.* Brethren farewell, your company along  
I will not wish, lest it perhaps offend them  
To see me girt with Friends; and how the sight  
Of me as of a common Enemy,  
So dreaded once, may now exasperate them  
I know not: Lords are Lordliest in their wine;  
And the well-feasted Priest then soonest fir'd  
With zeal, if aught Religion seem concern'd:  
No less the People on their Holy-days  
Impetuous, insolent, unquenchable;  
Happ'n what may, of me expect to hear  
Nothing dishonourable, impure, unworthy  
Our God, our Law; my Nation or my self,  
The last of me or no I cannot warrant.

*Chor.* Go, and the Holy One  
Of Israel be thy guide  
To what may serve his glory best, and spread his name  
Great among the Heathen round:  
Send the Angel of thy Birth to stand  
Fast by thy side, who from thy Father's field  
Rode up in flames after his message told  
Of thy conception, and be now a shield  
Of fire; that Spirit that first rusht on thee

In the Camp of Dan  
Be efficacious in thee now at need.  
For never was from Heaven imparted  
Measure of strength so great to mortal feed;  
As in thy wondrous actions hath been seen.  
But wherefore comes old *Manoa* in such haste  
With youthfull steps? much livelier than e'er while  
He seems: supposing here to find his Son,  
Or of him bringing to us some glad news?

*Man.* Peace with you, Brethren; my inducement hither  
Was not at present here to find my Son,  
By order of the Lords new parted hence  
To come and play before them at their Feast.  
I heard all as I came, the City rings  
And numbers thither flock, I had no will,  
Lest I should see him forc'd to things unseemly.  
But that which mov'd my coming now, was chiefly  
To give you part with me what hope I have  
With good success to work his liberty.

*Chor.* That hope would much rejoyce us to partake  
With thee; say, reverend Sire, We thirst to hear.

*Man.* I have attempted one by one the Lords  
Either at home, or through the high street passing,  
With supplication prone and Fathers tears  
To accept of ranfome for my Son their pris'oner,  
Some much averse I found and wondrous harsh,  
Contemptuous, proud, set on revenge and spite;  
That part most reverenc'd *Dagon* and his priests,  
Others more moderate seeming, but their aim  
Private reward, for which both God and State  
They easily would set to sale, a third

More



More generous far and civil, who confess'd  
They had enough reveng'd, having reduc'd  
Their foe to misery beneath their fears,  
The rest was magnanimity to remit,  
If some convenient ransom were propos'd.  
What noise or shout was that? it tore the Skie.

*Chor.* Doubtless the people shouting to behold  
Their once great dread, captive, and blind before them,  
Or at some proof of strength before them shown.

*Man.* His ransom, if my whole inheritance  
May compass it, shall willingly be paid  
And number'd down: much rather I shall chuse  
To live the poorest in my Tribe, than richest,  
And he in that calamitous prison left.  
No, I am fixt not to part hence without him.  
For his redemption all my Patrimony,  
If need be, I am ready to forgo  
And quit: not wanting him, I shall want nothing.

*Chor.* Fathers are wont to lay up for their Sons,  
Thou for thy Son art bent to lay out all;  
Sons wont to nurse their Parents in old age,  
Thou in old age canst how to nurse thy Son  
Made older than thy age through eye-sight lost.

*Man.* It shall be my delight to tend his eyes,  
And view him sitting in the house, enobl'd  
With all those high exploits by him achiev'd,  
And on his shoulders waving down those locks,  
That of a Nation arm'd the strength contain'd:  
And I persuade me God hath not permitted  
His strength again to grow up with his hair

Garrison'd

Garrison'd round about him like a Camp  
Of faithfull Souldiery, were not his purpose  
To use him farther yet in some great service,  
Not to sit idle with so great a gift  
Useless, and thence ridiculous about him.  
And since his strength with eye-sight was not lost,  
God will restore him eye-sight to his strength.

*Chor.* Thy hopes are not ill founded nor seem vain  
Of his delivery, and thy joy thereon  
Conceiv'd, agreeable to a Father's love,  
In both which we, as next, participate.

*Man.* I know your friendly minds and—O what noise!  
Mercy of Heav'n what hideous noise was that!  
Horribly loud unlike the former shout.

*Chor.* Noise call you it or universal groan  
As if the whole inhabitation perish'd,  
Bloud, death, and deathfull deeds are in that noise,  
Ruine, destruction at the utmost point.

*Man.* Of ruine indeed me-thought I heard the noise,  
Oh it continues, they have slain my Son.

*Chor.* Thy Son is rather slaying them, that outcry  
From slaughter of one Foe could not ascend.

*Man.* Some dismal accident it needs must be;  
What shall we do, stay here or run and see?

*Chor.* Best keep together here, lest running thither  
We unawares run into danger's mouth.  
This evil on the *Philistines* is fall'n,

From



From whom could else a general cry be heard?  
The sufferers then will scarce molest us here,  
From other hands we need not much to fear.  
What if his eye-sight (for to *Israel's* God  
Nothing is hard) by miracle restor'd,  
He now be dealing dole among his foes,  
And over heaps of slaughter'd walk his way?

*Man.* That were a joy presumptuous to be thought.

*Chor.* Yet God hath wrought things as incredible  
For his people of old; what hinders now?

*Man.* He can I know, but doubt to think he will;  
Yet Hope would fain subscribe and tempts Belief.  
A little stay will bring some notice hither.

*Chor.* Of good or bad so great, of bad the sooner;  
For evil news rides post, while good news baits.  
And to our wish I see one hither speeding,  
An *Hebrew*, as I guess, and of our Tribe.

*Meff.* O whither shall I run, or which way flee  
The sight of this so horrid spectacle  
Which erst my eyes beheld and yet behold?  
For dire imagination still pursues me.  
But providence or instinct of nature seems,  
Or reason though disturb'd, and scarce consulted  
To have guided me aright, I know not how,  
To the first reverend *Manoa*, and to these  
My Countreymen, whom here I knew remaining,  
As at some distance from the place of horror,  
So in the sad event too much concern'd.

*Man.* The accident was loud, and heard before thee  
With ruefull cry, yet what it was we hear not,  
No Preface needs, thou seest we long to know.

*Meff.* It would burst forth, but I recover breath  
And sense distract, to know well what I utter.

*Man.* Tell us the sum, the circumstance defer.

*Meff.* *Gaza* yet stands, but all her Sons are fall'n,  
All in a moment overwhelm'd and fall'n.

*Man.* Sad, but thou know'st to *Israelites* not saddest  
The desolation of a Hostile City.

*Meff.* Feed on that first, there may in grief be surfeit.

*Ma.* Relate by whom. *Meff.* By *Samson*. *Ma.* That still lessens  
The sorrow, and converts it nigh to joy.

*Meff.* Ah *Manoa*, I refrain, too suddenly  
To utter what will come at last too soon;  
Left evil tidings with too rude irruption  
Hitting thy aged ear should pierce too deep.

*Man.* Suspense in news is torture, speak them out.

*Meff.* Then take the worst in brief, *Samson* is dead.

*Man.* The worst indeed, O all my hope's defeated  
To free him hence! but death who sets all free  
Hath paid his ransom now and full discharge.  
What windy joy this day had I conceiv'd

H

Hopefull



Hopefull of his Delivery, which now proves  
Abortive as the first-born bloom of spring  
Nipt with the lagging rere of winters frost.  
Yet e'er I give the reins to grief, say first,  
How dy'd he? death to life is crown or shame.  
All by him fell thou say'st, by whom fell he,  
What glorious hand gave *Samson* his deaths wound?

*Meff.* Unwounded of his enemies he fell.

*Man.* Wearied with slaughter then or how? explain.

*Meff.* By his own hands.

*Man.* Self-violence? what cause  
Brought him so soon at variance with himself  
Among his Foes? *Meff.* Inevitable cause  
At once both to destroy and be destroy'd;  
The Edifice where all were met to see him  
Upon their heads and on his own he pull'd.

*Man.* O lastly over-strong against thy self!  
A dreadfull way thou took'st to thy revenge.  
More than enough we know; but while things yet  
Are in confusion, give us if thou canst,  
Eye-witness of what first or last was done,  
Relation more particular and distinct.

*Meff.* Occasions drew me early to this City,  
And as the gates I entr'd with Sun-rise,  
The morning Trumpets Festival proclaim'd  
Through each high street: little I had dispatch'd,  
When all abroad was rumour'd that this day  
*Samson* should be brought forth to shew the people

*Proof*

Proof of his mighty strength in feats and games;  
I sorrow'd at his captive state, but minded  
Not to be absent at that spectacle.  
The building was a specious Theatre  
Half-round on two main Pillars vaulted high,  
With seats where all the Lords and each degree  
Of sort, might sit in order to behold,  
The other side was op'n, where the throng  
On banks and scaffolds under Skie might stand;  
I among those aloof obscurely stood.  
The Feast and noon grew high, and Sacrifice  
Had fill'd their hearts with mirth, high chear, and wine  
When to their sports they turn'd. Immediately  
Was *Samson* as a publick servant brought,  
In their state Livery clad; before him Pipes  
And Timbrels, on each side went armed guards,  
Both horse and foot before him and behind  
Archers, and Slingers, Cataphracts and Spears.  
At sight of him the people with a shout  
Rifted the Air clamouring their god with praise,  
Who had made their dreadfull enemy their thrall.  
He patient but undaunted where they led him,  
Came to the place, and what was set before him  
Which without help of eye might be assay'd,  
To heave, pull, draw, or break, he still perform'd  
All with incredible, stupendious force,  
None daring to appear Antagonist.  
At length for intermission sake they led him  
Between the pillars; he his guide requested  
(For so from such as nearer stood we heard)  
As over-tir'd to let him lean a while  
With both his armes on those two massie Pillars  
That to the arched roof gave main support.  
He unsuspecting led him; which when *Samson*

H 2

Felt



Felt in his armes, with head a while enclin'd,  
 And eyes fast fixt he stood, as one who pray'd,  
 Or some great matter in his mind revolv'd.  
 At last with head erect thus cry'd aloud,  
 Hitherto, Lords, what your commands impos'd  
 I have perform'd, as reason was, obeying,  
 Nor without wonder or delight beheld.  
 Now of my own accord such other tryal  
 I mean to shew you of my strength, yet greater;  
 As with amaze shall strike all who behold.  
 This utter'd, straining all his nerves he bow'd,  
 As with the force of winds and waters pent,  
 When Mountains tremble, those two massie Pillars  
 With horrible convulsion to and fro,  
 He tugg'd, he took, till down they came and drew  
 The whole roof after them, with burst of thunder  
 Upon the heads of all who sat beneath,  
 Lords, Ladies, Captains, Councillors, or Priests,  
 Their choice Nobility and flower, not onely  
 Of this but each *Philistian* City round  
 Met from all parts to solemnize this Feast.  
*Samson* with these immixt, inevitably  
 Pull'd down the same destruction on himself;  
 The vulgar onely scap'd who stood without.

*Chor.* O dearly-bought revenge, yet glorious!  
 Living or dying thou hast fulfill'd  
 The work for which thou wast foretold  
 To *Israel*, and now ly'st victorious  
 Among thy slain self-kill'd  
 Not willingly, but tangl'd in the fold,  
 Of dire necessity, whose law in death conjoin'd  
 Thee with thy slaughter'd foes, in number more  
 Than all thy life had slain before.

*Semichor.*

*Semichor.* While their hearts were jocond & sublime,  
 Drunk with Idolatry, drunk with Wine,  
 And fat regorg'd of Bulls and Goats,  
 Chaunting their Idol, and preferring  
 Before our living Dread who dwells  
 In *Silo* his bright Sanctuary:  
 Among them he a spirit of phrenzie sent,  
 Who hurt their minds,  
 And urg'd them on with mad desire  
 To call in haste for their destroyer;  
 They onely set on sport and play  
 Unweetingly importun'd  
 Their own destruction to come speedy upon them.  
 So fond are mortal men  
 Fall'n into wrath divine,  
 As their own ruine on themselves to invite,  
 Insensate left, or to sense reprobate,  
 And with blindness internal struck.

*Semichor.* But he though blind of sight,  
 Despis'd and thought extinguish'd quite,  
 With inward eyes illuminated  
 His fierie virtue rouz'd  
 From under ashes into sudden flame,  
 And as an ev'ning Dragon came,  
 Assailant on the perched roosts,  
 And nests in order rang'd  
 Of tame villatick Fowl; but as an Eagle  
 His cloudless thunder bolted on their heads.  
 So virtue giv'n for lost,  
 Deprest, and overthrown, as seem'd,  
 Like that self-begott'n Bird  
 In the *Arabian* woods embost,

That



That no second knows nor third,  
And lay e'er while a Holocaust,  
From out her ashic womb now teem'd,  
Revives, reffourishes, then vigorous most  
When most unactive deem'd,  
And though her body die, her fame survives,  
A secular Bird ages of lives.

*Man.* Come, come, no time for lamentation now,  
Nor much more cause, *Samson* hath quit himself  
Like *Samson*, and heroickly hath finish'd  
A life Heroick, on his Enemies  
Fully reveng'd, hath left them years of mourning,  
And lamentation to the Sons of *Chaptor*  
Through all *Philistian* bounds. To *Israel*  
Honour hath left, and freedom, let but them  
Find courage to lay hold on this occasion,  
To himself and Father's house eternal fame;  
And which is best and happiest yet, all this  
With God not parted from him, as was fear'd,  
But favouring and assisting to the end.  
Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail  
Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,  
Dispraise, or blame, nothing but well and fair,  
And what may quiet us in a death so noble.  
Let us go find the body where it lies  
Sok'd in his enemies bloud, and from the stream  
With lavers pure and cleansing herbs wash off  
The clodded gore. I with what speed the while  
(*Gaza* is not in plight to say us nay)  
Will fend for all my kindred, all my friends  
To fetch him hence and solemnly attend  
With silent obsequie and funeral train  
Home to his Father's house: there will I build him  
A Monument

A Monument, and plant it round with shade  
Of Laurel ever green, and branching Palm,  
With all his Trophies hung, and Acts enroll'd  
In copious Legend, or sweet Lyrick Song.  
Thither shall all the valiant youth resort,  
And from his memory inflame their breasts  
To matchless valour, and adventures high:  
The Virgins also shall on feastfull days  
Visit his Tomb with flowers, onely bewailing  
His lot unfortunate in nuptial choice,  
From whence captivity and loss of eyes.

*Chor.* All is best, though we oft doubt,  
What th' unsearchable dispose  
Of highest wisdom brings about,  
And ever best found in the close.  
Oft he seems to hide his face,  
But unexpectedly returns  
And to his faithfull Champion hath in place  
Bore witness gloriously; whence *Gaza* mourns  
And all that band them to resist  
His uncontrollable intent,  
His servant he with new acquit  
Of true experience from this great event  
With peace and consolation hath dismiss'd,  
And calm of mind all passion spent.

T H E E N D.